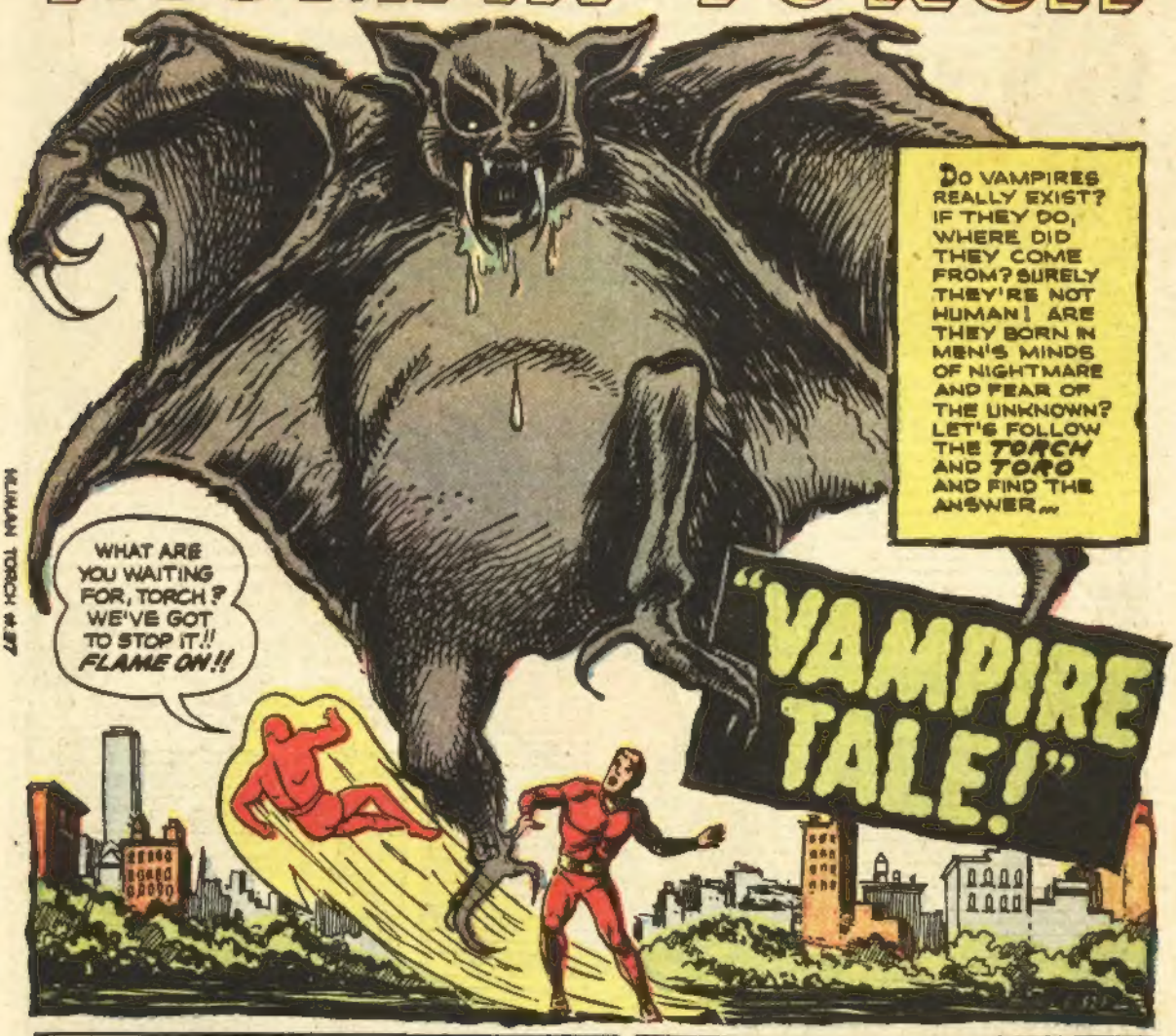
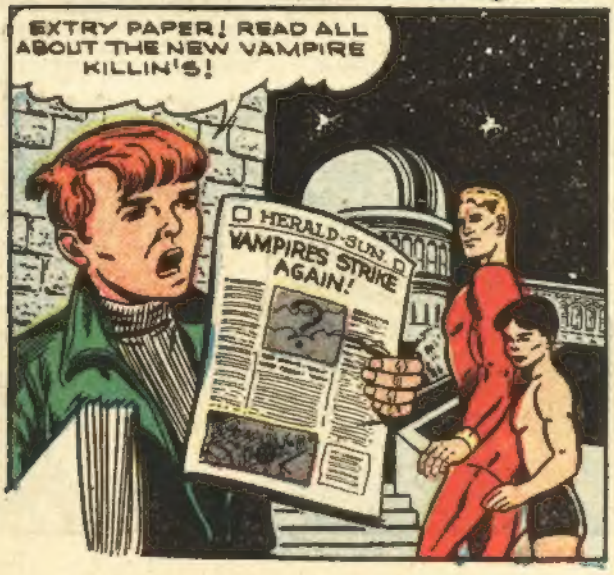
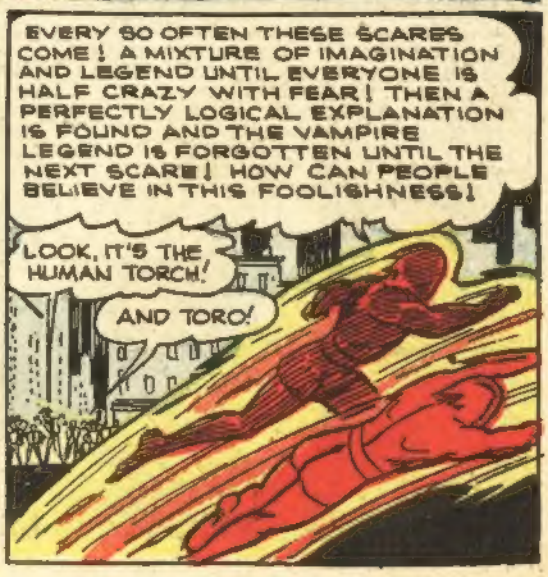
HUMAN TORCH...MAN OF FLAME
JUNE
10¢
HUMAN TORCH
NO. 37
FLAME ON!

THE HUMAN TORCH


DO VAMPIRES REALLY EXIST? IF THEY DO, WHERE DID THEY COME FROM? SURELY THEY'RE NOT HUMAN! ARE THEY BORN IN MEN'S MINDS OF NIGHTMARE AND FEAR OF THE UNKNOWN? LET'S FOLLOW THE TORCH AND TORO AND FIND THE ANSWER...
WHAT ARE YOU WAITING FOR, TORCH? WE'VE GOT TO STOP IT!! FLAME ON!!
"VAMPIRE TALE!"




EVERY SO OFTEN THESE SCARES COME! A MIXTURE OF IMAGINATION AND LEGEND UNTIL EVERYONE IS HALF CRAZY WITH FEAR! THEN A PERFECTLY LOGICAL EXPLANATION IS FOUND AND THE VAMPIRE LEGEND IS FORGOTTEN UNTIL THE NEXT SCARE! HOW CAN PEOPLE BELIEVE IN THIS FOOLISHNESS!
LOOK, IT'S THE HUMAN TORCH!
AND TORO!

NOT SO LONG AGO TELEVISION WOULD HAVE BEEN CALLED FOOLISHNESS... OR WHAT PROFESSOR COLLING WILL SHOW US OF THE HEAVENS TONIGHT WOULD'VE BEEN CALLED WITCHCRAFT!

TORCH, YOU'RE NOT SAYING YOU BELIEVE THIS VAMPIRE STUFF?

TORCH AND TORO! I'M *GLAD* TO SEE YOU!

I KNOW NOTHING ABOUT VAMPIRES, SO I CAN'T SAY WHAT'S TRUTH AND WHAT'S NOT! HELLO, PROFESSOR! HOW'S THE GALAXY TONIGHT?

IT'S A WONDERFUL NIGHT FOR OBSERVATION! LET ME ADJUST THE GIANT TELESCOPE AND I'LL EXPLAIN THINGS AS WE GO ALONG!

THE INFINITE REACHES OF THE GALAXY HAVE ALWAYS FASCINATED ME! SOMEDAY, MAN WILL CONQUER SPACE!

SOMEDAY, PERHAPS! THERE! NOW I'LL... *WHAT'S THAT!* LOOK! QUICKLY! A METEOR... AND HEADING RIGHT FOR EARTH!

ARE YOU SURE THAT'S A METEOR, PROFESSOR? IT LOOKS ALMOST AS THOUGH IT MIGHT BE A... *SPACE SHIP!*

NONSENSE! IT'S COMING CLOSER! THERE, NOW IT'S GONE BEYOND THE SWING OF THIS SCOPE! BUT IT'S GOING TO LAND QUITE NEAR HERE, I THINK!

I'M GOING TO CALL THE OTHER OBSERVATORIES TO CONFIRM! WITH ALL THE INFORMATION, I SHOULD BE ABLE TO CHART WHERE IT LANDED!

IF YOU CAN, I'D LIKE TO GO TO THE SITE AND SEE IT!

THERE WE ARE! THE METEOR LANDED APPROXIMATELY HERE, IN THE MOUNTAINS!

THAT'S WHERE THE *VAMPIRE* SCARE IS! METEORS AND VAMPIRES... WHAT A COMBINATION!

IT WAS THE NEXT EVENING THAT THE TORCH AND TORO ARRIVED AT A SMALL VILLAGE IN THE MOUNTAINS...

LANDLORD, DO YOU HAVE ROOM FOR TWO VISITORS?

PLENTY OF ROOM! SINCE THE VAMPIRE NONSENSE, ALL THE VACATIONERS PACKED UP AND LEFT! COME IN! I'LL SHOW YOU TO YOUR ROOM!

HOTEL

ROOMS FOR RENT • DAY • WEEK • MONTH

LOOKS LIKE A STORM COMING UP!

ALWAYS IN THE SUMMER THE MOUNTAINS HAVE MANY STORMS! SOMETIMES RAIN, BUT ALWAYS BIG WINDS AND LIGHTNING!

THIS PLACE LOOKS LIKE THE SETTING FOR A HORROR MOVIE! BUT THE BEDS ARE SOFT! LET'S GET SOME SLEEP, GET UP EARLY IN THE MORNING AND LOOK FOR THAT METEOR!

STORM SEEMS TO BE GETTING WORSE! LISTEN TO THAT WIND HOWL!

THE WIND HOWLED ITS BANSHEE WAIL... BOARDS IN THE OLD INN CREAKED AND CRACKED! THEY SLEPT! THEN...

TORO... DID YOU HEAR THAT? IT SOUNDED LIKE A SCREAM!

JUST THE STORM, TORCH!

EEEEEEEEEEEE

THEY STRAINED THEIR EYES AT THE TURBULENT BLACKNESS OUTSIDE! THEN LIGHTNING STREAKED THROUGH THE SKY...

LOOK!

IT LOOKS LIKE... LIKE A *BIG BAT*!

WHATEVER IT IS, WE'RE GOING TO FOLLOW IT! ***FLAME ON!*** CONTROL THE FLAME FROM YOUR FEET, TORO, UNTIL YOU'RE IN THE AIR, OR YOU'LL SET FIRE TO THE FLOOR BOARDS!

THERE... IT'S GOING DOWN!

IT CAME DOWN ABOUT HERE! SEE IT ANY PLACE? FLAME OFF!

THERE'S A BIG CAVE... MAYBE IT WENT IN THERE!

WHAT'S THAT NOISE?

I DON'T KNOW! IT'S A SORT OF SQUEALING... SEEMS TO BE COMING CLOSER!

EEE EEEE EEE

BATS... THOUSANDS OF THEM! THEY MUST ROOST IN THIS CAVE! THEY'RE ATTACKING! FLAME ON!

WE'LL BURN THEM OUT!

A VILE SMELL FILLED THE AIR; THE SMELL OF BURNING FLESH AND FUR! THE SWARMING, VICIOUS BATS FELL SQUEALING AND FROTHING UNDER LANCES OF FLAME!

IT ALMOST SEEMS AS THOUGH THEY WANT TO KEEP US FROM GOING ANY DEEPER INTO THE CAVE!

THEY TURNED THEIR FLAMES OFF AND MOVED DEEPER INTO THE CAVE...

IT WIDENS OUT HERE!

THERE WAS ONLY A RUSTLE, NO REAL WARNING... THEN THE TORCH WAS WHIRLED AROUND AND...

FLAME ON!

TORCH!

EEEEEEE!

SILENTLY THEY FOLLOWED THE THREE BAT SHAPES THROUGH THE GLOOM...

WE'RE GOING IN THERE! I DON'T KNOW WHAT WE'LL FIND, AND I'M AFRAID TO GUESS, BUT WE'VE GOT TO KNOW!
I'VE ALWAYS HATED BATS... BUT I GUESS WE'VE GOT TO SEE THIS THROUGH! LET'S GO!

THEY STEPPED THROUGH THE CRACK, THEIR HEARTS BEATING WITH EXCITEMENT! FOR A MOMENT, THE TRANSITION FROM THE DARK TO THE LIGHT THAT GLOWED BLINDED THEM! THEN THEY COULD SEE...

YES, IT IS A SPACE SHIP... FROM PSI CENTAURI, A PLANET OF THE OUTER GALAXY... OUR HOME! ON **YOUR** PLANET INTELLIGENT LIFE EVOLVED FROM APE-LIKE CREATURES ...ON **MY** PLANET, INTELLIGENT LIFE EVOLVED FROM **BATS!**

WE HAVE COME TO RELIEVE YOU OF THE CRIMINALS OF OUR SPECIES... THE CREATURES YOU CALL **VAMPIRES**! THEY, LIKE US, LIVE MANY THOUSANDS OF YEARS! YOU WONDER HOW THEY GOT HERE? I WILL TELL YOU...

"MANY THOUSANDS OF YEARS AGO, A CRIMINAL CULT FORMED ON OUR PLANET! THEY WERE MUTATIONS WHO MUST DRINK LIFE BLOOD TO SURVIVE! WE ROUNDED THEM ALL UP, TOOK THEM INTO OUTER SPACE TO FIND A REMOTE PLANET WHERE THEIR EVIL COULD HURT NO ONE! WE FOUND EARTH..."

"WE THOUGHT THEY WOULD DIE HERE! THEN A SCOUT SHIP PASSED EARTH AGAIN AND FOUND THAT AN INTELLIGENT SPECIES HAD DEVELOPED AND THAT OUR CRIMINALS HAD EVOLVED A PROTECTIVE FORM AS HUMANS BY DAY, BUT RETURNED TO BATS AT NIGHT, AND PREYED UPON MANKIND..."

SO WE HAVE COME TO ROUND THEM UP AND TAKE THEM AWAY TO SOME OTHER UNDEVELOPED PLANET, HOPING THIS TIME THEY ***WON'T*** SURVIVE! IT IS AGAINST OUR TEACHINGS TO KILL! NOW WE SHALL GO TO HUNGARY TO PICK UP MORE OF THEM!

IF I DIDN'T SEE AND HEAR IT, I WOULDN'T BELIEVE IT!

A FEW MINUTES LATER, A STREAK ROSE IN THE SKY...

WHAT WAS THAT HE SAID JUST BEFORE THEY TOOK OFF?

HE ASKED US NOT TO TELL WHAT WE'VE SEEN! HE'S AFRAID OUR PEOPLE WOULD BECOME ALARMED, KNOWING A RACE OF BATS CAN COME TO EARTH! WE WON'T TELL... BECAUSE NO ONE WOULD EVER BELIEVE US!

THE END

MORE FLAMING ADVENTURES STARRING THE HUMAN TORCH IN YOUNG MEN COMICS! LOOK FOR IT AT YOUR FAVORITE NEWSSTAND!

THE HUMAN TORCH

SOMETIMES SEEMINGLY UNRELATED ITEMS WEAVE AND FORM A PATTERN OF FATE... AND SOMETIMES THEY FORM A WORD... AND THE WORD IS... DEATH!

THE RAIN IS QUENCHING YOUR FLAME, AND I'M GOING TO SQUASH YOU LIKE A WORM! YOU'RE THROUGH, HUMAN TORCH!

"A SPY THERE WAS..."

E 327

IT BEGAN IN THE OFFICE OF CHIEF WILSON ON A RAINY DAY...

SEE THE MISSING PERSONS BUREAU AND TELL THEM!

BUT YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND! THIS IS **NOT** AN ORDINARY MISSING PERSON CASE! MY FATHER, PROFESSOR JAN SKARDA, WAS ONE OF THE LEADING NUCLEAR PHYSICISTS IN EUROPE!

WHEN THE COMMUNISTS MOVED INTO OUR COUNTRY, WE TRIED TO ESCAPE! I SUCCEEDED, BUT THEY CAUGHT FATHER! I'VE HAD WORD THAT HE ESCAPED AND MAY HAVE MANAGED TO COME TO AMERICA... BUT I CAN'T FIND HIM! YOU **MUST** HELP ME!

MY FATHER WAS WORKING ON A NEW FISSION MATERIAL FOR ATOMIC BOMBS! THAT'S WHAT THE REDS WANTED HIM FOR! IT WOULD BE OF IMMENSE VALUE TO AMERICA!
IT'S A DIFFICULT TASK TO FIND ONE MAN IN A COUNTRY AS BIG AS OURS... ESPECIALLY A MAN WHO MIGHT NOT EVEN BE HERE!
DISAPPEARANCE REPORTED, CHIEF! A JANITOR ON THE EAST SIDE! SIGNS OF A STRUGGLE!
TAKE CARE OF IT, CASEY!
I'M RESTLESS FROM INACTION! WE'LL GO ALONG WITH CASEY, CHIEF, JUST FOR SOMETHING TO DO! COME ON, TORO!
NOW, MISS SKARDA, IF YOU'LL GIVE ME A DESCRIPTION, WE'LL DO ALL WE CAN!
SIRENS SHRIEKED IN THE RAIN! THE BUILDING WHERE THE DISAPPEARANCE HAD TAKEN PLACE WAS OLD AND RUN-DOWN...
THE TENANTS SAY HE WAS A NICE OLD GUY... NEVER HAD ANY VISITORS... SPOKE WITH AN ACCENT! SEEMED TO BE AFRAID OF SOMETHING ALL THE TIME!
WHATEVER HAPPENED, IT WAS AGAINST HIS WILL!
HIS NAME WAS JOHN SARTORIUS! NO OTHER IDENTIFICATION! WE CHECKED!
NOTHING MORE TO BE DONE HERE! WE'LL SEND OUT A GENERAL ALARM! YOU COMIN' BACK TO H.Q. WITH US, TORCH?
ER... NO!
WHAT WAS THAT YOU PICKED UP, TORCH... A CLUE?
I THINK SO! A NEWSPAPER CLIPPING THAT COULD ONLY HAVE BEEN DROPPED BY THE MISSING JANITOR OR THE MEN WHO KIDNAPED HIM! REMEMBER, HE NEVER HAD VISITORS!

BUT THIS IS ABOUT DEAN PRENTISS RUNNING FOR GOVERNOR! WHAT COULD HE HAVE TO DO WITH A MISSING JANITOR?

THAT'S WHAT WE'RE GOING TO FIND OUT!

IT HAD STOPPED RAINING, BUT LEADEN CLOUDS GAVE PROMISE OF MORE TO COME ...

FLAME ON! IN THIS WEATHER WE'D FIND IT HARD TO GET A TAXI, AND THE RAIN'S STOPPED SO IT WON'T AFFECT OUR FLAME! WE'LL TRAVEL TO THE PRENTISS ESTATE BY THE HEAT PROPULSION WE GENERATE OURSELVES!

THEY TOOK TO THE AIR, THE EXPLOSIVE GASES GENERATED BY THEIR FLAMES ACTING LIKE MYRIAD SMALL JETS ...

THERE'S DEAN PRENTISS' ESTATE!

LOOK AT THAT WALL! GUESS A MAN WITH HIS MONEY AND POWER NEEDS PRIVACY!

JUST IN TIME ... IT'S BEGINNING TO RAIN AGAIN! LET'S SCOUT AROUND FIRST!

WATCH IT!

THROW A COUPLE OF FIREBALLS! THAT SHOULD SCARE THEM OFF!

GRROWRRL!

THEY'LL KEEP THEIR DISTANCE, EVEN THOUGH OUR FLAME IS GETTING WEAKER FROM THE RAIN!

LOOK, THERE'S LIGHT COMING FROM THE CELLAR WINDOWS OF THE MANSION!

KIYIYIYIYI!

THE HUGE DOGS DISAPPEARED, AND THE TORCH AND TORO QUIETLY APPROACHED THE HOUSE ...

LOOK! THAT OLD MAN MUST BE THE MISSING JANITOR! THE WELL-DRESSED MAN IS DEAN PRENTISS!

THEY'VE BEEN TORTURING THAT POOR OLD MAN!

CONTINUED AFTER NEXT PAGE...

I TELL YOU, YOU HAVE MADE A MISTAKE! I KNOW NOTHING THAT CAN HELP THE COMMUNISTS!

IF YOU KNOW WHAT'S GOOD FOR YOU, YOU'LL TELL US WHAT WE WANT TO KNOW!

IT'S TIME TO STOP THIS LITTLE PARTY!

IT'S THE TORCH AND TORO!

GET THEM!

PRENTISS IS GETTING AWAY WITH THE OLD MAN!

NOW, PRENTISS...

TURN OFF YOUR FLAMES, BOTH OF YOU, OR I'LL KILL THE OLD MAN!

TO TURN OFF THEIR FLAME WOULD LEAVE THEM AS VULNERABLE AS ANY ORDINARY MORTAL... BUT THE FATE OF THE OLD MAN LAY IN THEIR DECISION...

ALL RIGHT! ***FLAME OFF!*** NOW WHAT?

NOW YOU CAN'T STOP MY LEAD!

IT'S NOT THAT EASY, YOU DIRTY TRAITOR! GET THE OLD MAN, TORO!

UGHHH!

TAKE HIM!
LOOK OUT FOR YOUR FLAME, TORO ... YOU'LL BURN HIM!
FLAME OFF!
CONTROL THE FLAME ON YOUR HAND AND ARM NEAR THE OLD MAN!
PRENTISS GOT AWAY!
OUTSIDE THE RAIN PELTED DOWN, EXTINGUISHING THEIR FLAME ...
HE CAN'T BE FAR! TORO, TAKE THE OLD MAN TO CHIEF WILSON! I'M GOING TO TRY AND GET PRENTISS!
RIGHT, TORCH!
TORO AND THE OLD MAN LEFT! CAUTIOUSLY SCOUTING THROUGH THE RAIN, THE MAN OF FLAME SEARCHED FOR PRENTISS ...
EVERYONE THINKS SO HIGHLY OF PRENTISS, HE WAS A CINCH TO WIN THE ELECTION! WHO'D THINK A MAN LIKE HIM WOULD BE A RED! WHAT'S THAT?
THIS TIME I'VE GOT YOU, TORCH! YOU'RE TOO WET TO HAVE ANY POWER IN YOUR FLAME!
HE'S RIGHT! I CAN'T STOP THAT THING!
INSIDE THE TOOLSHED, HE FOUND SOME WASTE AND RAGS! OUTSIDE THE TRACTOR RUMBLED, CLOSER, CLOSER ... INDESTRUCTIBLE, INEVITABLE AS DEATH ...
IF I CAN ONLY GET MY HAND AND ARM DRY!
I'M COMING, TORCH! I'LL CRUSH THAT SHACK AROUND YOU ... SQUASH YOU LIKE A WORM!
AT LAST! MY ARM'S DRY! AND NOW...

THE TERRIBLE HEAT BEAT AGAINST THE TRACTOR! THE BLADE GLOWED... THE METAL-MELTING HEAT SPREAD... RAIN HISSED AGAINST THE HEAT...

HISSS

CRASH

HISSS

HE'S ESCAPING!

THE DOGS!

HIS OWN DOGS... TURNED ON HIM AND KILLED HIM! DEAN PRENTISS, PILLAR OF SOCIETY, THE MAN EVERYONE ADMIRED... BUT HIS DOGS KNEW HIM AS HE **REALLY** WAS, AND THEY WAITED FOR THE RIGHT TIME!

AAAGH!

SOMETIME LATER, AT CHIEF WILSON'S OFFICE...

WHY DID THOSE REDS WANT **YOU**? WHAT DID THEY WANT? WHY ARE YOU SO AFRAID?

I-I DON'T KNOW... I CAN'T TELL YOU!

MR. WILSON, HAVE YOU ANY WORD ABOUT... ***FATHER!***

MY CHILD! THEY TOLD ME THEY STILL HAD **YOU** IN A CONCENTRATION CAMP! I KEPT MY IDENTITY A SECRET, AFRAID OF WHAT THEY'D DO TO **YOU**... BUT THEY FOUND ME!

OH, FATHER, NOW YOU CAN GIVE YOUR SECRET TO THE U.S.! BECOME A CITIZEN... AND... NO MORE FEAR!

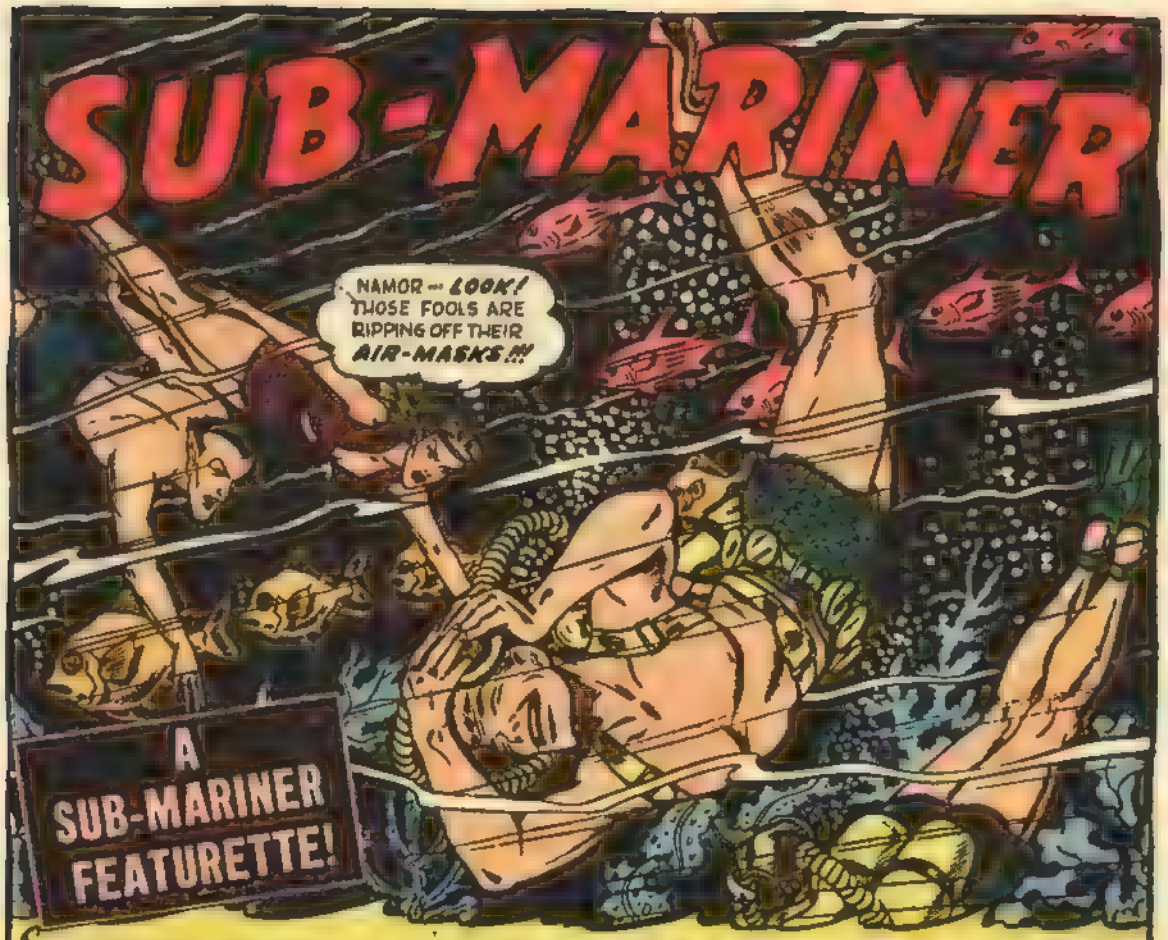
WHAT I CAN'T UNDERSTAND IS WHY A MAN LIKE DEAN PRENTISS, WITH ALL **HE** HAD, BECAME A RED!

IN ***EVERY*** SOCIETY THERE ARE PEOPLE WHO ARE MENTALLY SICK, TORD! ONLY A MADMAN WOULD FORSAKE THE GLORIOUS FREEDOM OF AMERICA, FOR THE UNSPEAKABLE TYRANNY OF COMMUNISM!

WELL, WE'VE GAINED TWO FINE, NEW CITIZENS NOW. THE SKARDAS!

MEN'S ADVENTURES COMICS HAS MORE ***HUMAN TORCH*** ADVENTURES!
BE SURE TO GET IT AT YOUR NEWSSTAND!

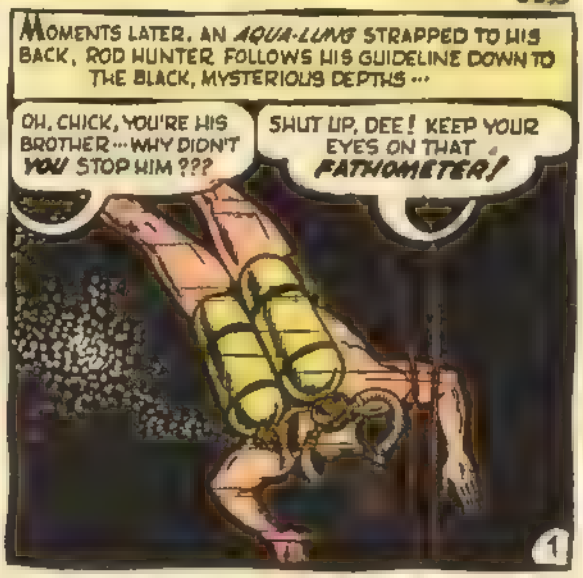
SUB-MARINER



A SUB-MARINER FEATURETTE!

SOME MEN HEED THE CALL OF THE WILD, AND TAKE TO DESOLATE REACHES OF UNEXPLORED COUNTRY—TO DISAPPEAR FOREVER ··· OTHERS ANSWER THE IRRESISTIBLE URGE TO SEARCH THE LOWEST DEPTHS OF THE BLACK OCEAN—AND THEY, TOO, DISAPPEAR FOREVER! THERE IS SOMETHING ABOUT THE BLUE-BLACK NOTHING OF DEEP WATERS THAT OVERPOWERS MAN'S STRONGEST WILL—THE FRENCH CALL IT "*THE RAPTURE OF THE DEPTHS*"—AND THIS IS HIS GREATEST RISK IN MAKING A "FREE" DIVE ··· BUT IT IS A RISK *ROD HUNTER* CHOOSES TO IGNORE AS HE PREPARES TO BREAK THE WORLD'S RECORD OF *396 FT.*, THE DEEPEST FREE DIVE ANY MAN HAS EVER SURVIVED!

ROD, PLEASE DON'T! *PLEASE!* YOU'LL NEVER COME UP··· I *KNOW* YOU WON'T! I'LL NEVER *SEE* YOU AGAIN!
DON'T BE SILLY, DOLORES! THAT "RAPTURE" STUFF'S A BUNCH OF NONSENSE! I'LL EVEN BEAT THE RECORD OF 396 FEET SET BY THAT FRENCHMAN THEY HAULED UP DEAD!


MOMENTS LATER, AN *AQUA-LUNG* STRAPPED TO HIS BACK, ROD HUNTER FOLLOWS HIS GUIDELINE DOWN TO THE BLACK, MYSTERIOUS DEPTHS ···
OH, CHICK, YOU'RE HIS BROTHER··· WHY DIDN'T *YOU* STOP HIM ???
SHUT UP, DEE! KEEP YOUR EYES ON THAT *FATHOMETER!*
1

CHICK, LOOK! *LOOK!* HE'S DOWN TO *400 FT.* ALREADY! NOW HE'S LEVELING OFF ... *NO! LOOK!* HE'S GOING *DOWN* AGAIN! *HE'S PASSED THE MEASURING-LINE ANCHOR!!!*

400

450 ... 500 ... 550 ... 575 ... *600!* THE SUPERSONIC ECHO SIGNALS ARE WEAK--I CAN HARDLY HEAR THEM! 625 ... 630 ... *WAIT!* I CAN'T HEAR *ANYTHING* NOW!

THE ... THE FATHOMETER GRID'S *BLANK*, CHICK!

YEAH ... YEAH! I GUESS YOU WERE RIGHT, DOLORES --- HE'S *MAD* IT! GEE, I ... I'M SORRY, KID!

OH, YOU ... YOU *MEN!* YOU WON'T EVER LISTEN TO A WOMAN! WELL ... I KNOW SOMEONE WHO *WILL!* I'M GOING TO GET *HELP!*

TWENTY MINUTES LATER, IN THE FLORIDA RESORT COTTAGE OF BETTY DEAN, DOLORES FACES PRINCE NAMOR, *THE SUB-MARINER*, AND HIS CONSTANT COMPANION, *NAMORA* ...

AND--AND THAT'S WHAT HAPPENED, NAMOR! WILL YOU HELP ME?

OF COURSE, MISS! NAMORA AND I ARE BOTH IMMUNE TO THE SO-CALLED "RAPTURE" ... WE'LL FIND YOUR FRIEND FOR YOU!

BACK ON THE DIVING RAFT ...

CHICK! YOU--YOU'RE NOT GOING DOWN THERE, TOO! I--I'VE BROUGHT THE SUB-MARINER AND NAMORA TO HELP US!

WHAT DID YOU BRING *THEM* FOR? THIS IS A FAMILY AFFAIR ... ROD'S MY BROTHER, AND *I'M* GOING DOWN TO GET HIM!

DON'T BE A FOOL, MAN! YOU'RE ONLY HUMAN, AND IF YOUR BROTHER SUCCUMBED TO THE LURE OF THE DEEP, SO WILL *YOU!* BE *REASONABLE*, MISTER!

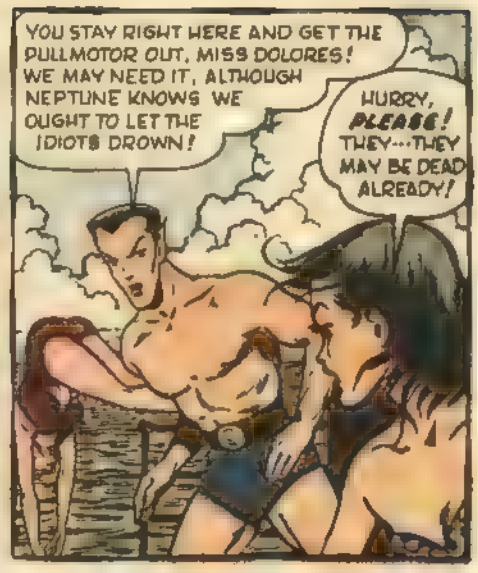
YOU KEEP OUT OF THIS! I KNOW WHAT I'M DOING! BESIDES, I'M A LOT STRONGER THAN ROD WAS --- *I'M!*

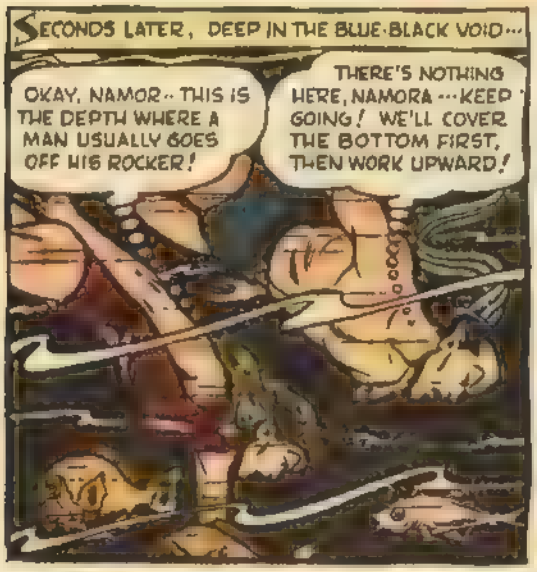
FOOL! STUPID, STUBBORN, INCOMPETENT FOOL! WHEN WILL THESE HUMANS EVER LEARN? LET HIM GO, MISS DOLORES ...

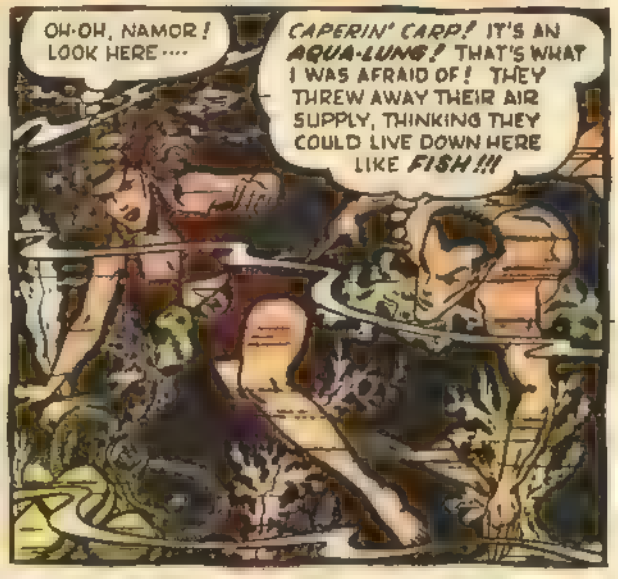
DON'T WORRY, HONEY ... WE'LL WATCH THE DEPTH-RECORDER, AND IF HE RUNS INTO TROUBLE ---

··· WE'LL GET HIM OUT! HE'S DOWN TO 350 --- NOW 400 --- 500 --- 520 --- NOW HE'S STOPPED! NO -- LOOK! HE'S DIVING AGAIN - FAST! 530 --- 550 --- 575 --- 600!!!

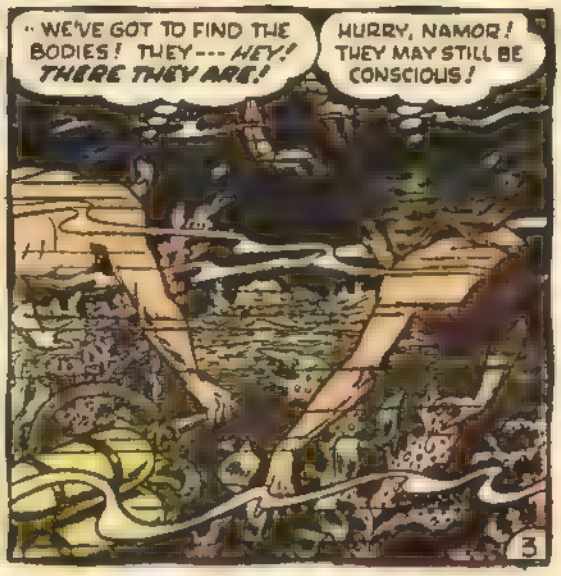
THE FATHOMETER'S QUIT, NAMORA! HE'S CUT OUT ON US! WE'LL HAVE TO GO AFTER HIM ··· SOMETIMES THESE GUYS RIP OFF THEIR MASKS WHEN THEY REACH THE "RAPTURE" LEVEL!


YOU STAY RIGHT HERE AND GET THE PULLMOTOR OUT, MISS DOLORES! WE MAY NEED IT, ALTHOUGH NEPTUNE KNOWS WE OUGHT TO LET THE IDIOTS DROWN!
HURRY, PLEASE! THEY···THEY MAY BE DEAD ALREADY!


SECONDS LATER, DEEP IN THE BLUE-BLACK VOID···
OKAY, NAMOR·· THIS IS THE DEPTH WHERE A MAN USUALLY GOES OFF HIS ROCKER!
THERE'S NOTHING HERE, NAMORA ··· KEEP GOING! WE'LL COVER THE BOTTOM FIRST, THEN WORK UPWARD!


OH-OH, NAMOR! LOOK HERE····
CAPERIN' CARP! IT'S AN AQUA-LUNG! THAT'S WHAT I WAS AFRAID OF! THEY THREW AWAY THEIR AIR SUPPLY, THINKING THEY COULD LIVE DOWN HERE LIKE FISH!!!

I···I THINK I CAN UNDERSTAND THAT, NAMOR··· IT'S SO-SO TERRIFYINGLY BEAUTIFUL! A REAL TROPICAL PARADISE! IT EVEN MAKES ME A LITTLE LIGHT-HEADED!
HOGWASH!!! YOU SOUND LIKE ONE OF THOSE STUPID SURFACE-PEOPLE! COME ON, NOW···


·· WE'VE GOT TO FIND THE BODIES! THEY··· HEY! THERE THEY ARE!
HURRY, NAMOR! THEY MAY STILL BE CONSCIOUS!

WELL, WELL, WELL! LOOK WHO'S HERE, CHICK -- WE'VE GOT COMPANY!

BE CAREFUL, ROD --- IT'S THE SUB-MARINER AND HIS GIRL FRIEND!

GREAT GALLOPIN' GARFISH! THESE GUYS ARE ALIVE! AND --AND TALKING! I --- I CAN'T BELIEVE IT!

HO, HO! HE CAN'T BELIEVE IT, ROD! THE HIGH AND MIGHTY SUB-MARINER THINKS HE AND HIS PRETTY SIDEKICK ARE THE ONLY ONES WHO CAN LIVE UNDER-WATER!

LOOK --- I DON'T UNDERSTAND THIS, BUT HADN'T YOU TWO BETTER GET BACK TO THE RAFT — BEFORE YOU DROWN!

GO BACK TO THE RAFT, HE SAYS! BEFORE WE DROWN, HE SAYS! HO, HO! ARE YOU CRAZY, MAN? WHO WOULD WANT TO LEAVE A PARADISE LIKE THIS? JUST LOOK AROUND YOU, FELLA -- DID YOU EVER SEE ANYTHING SO BEAUTIFUL? WE DON'T EVER WANT TO GO BACK!!!

YEAH! AND WE'RE NOT THE ONLY ONES! LOOK HERE -- LOOK AT THESE OTHERS! THEY'VE BEEN DOWN HERE LOTS LONGER THAN WE HAVE, AND THEY DON'T WANT TO LEAVE, EITHER!

WELL, I'LL BE A PICKLED HERRING! BUT --- BUT HOW DO YOU MANAGE TO BREATHE? YOU HUMANS REQUIRE AIR! AND WHAT OF YOUR LOVED ONES UP ON THE SURFACE? WHAT OF DOLORES WHO, EVEN NOW, IS GRIEF-STRICKEN OVER YOUR PRESUMED DEATHS?

BREATHE? WHO NEEDS TO BREATHE IN AN ATMOSPHERE LIKE THIS?!! THIS IS SHEER HEAVEN, MY BOY! AS FOR DEE, SHE'LL LEARN TO FORGET US IN TIME!

LISTEN --- YOU MEN ARE CRAZY!

I DON'T KNOW HOW YOU'RE DOING THIS, BUT IT'S GOT TO STOP RIGHT NOW! YOU'RE GOING BACK TO THE SURFACE IF I HAVE TO TAKE YOU THERE MYSELF!
O-NO! SO FISH-FACE WANTS TO GET TOUGH, EH? GET 'IM, ROD! I'LL GET THE GIRL!
BEFORE THE SUB-MARINER CAN ACT, HE IS STUNNED BY A SAVAGE BLOW ON THE HEAD! NAMORA, TOO, IS FELLED BY HER FURIOUS ASSAILANT....
NO ONE CAN MAKE US RETURN!
WE'RE HAPPY HERE!
LET'S TIE 'EM UP WITH THESE AQUA-LUNG HARNESS STRAPS, CHICK!
YEAH... THEN WE'D BETTER GET AWAY FROM HERE!
NO... JUST FAR ENOUGH SO NO ONE WILL FIND US AGAIN!
GOOD! I DON'T WANT TO LEAVE! BOY, THIS IS REALLY LIVIN'!
MOMENTS LATER, THE VICTIMS REVIVE...
BLAST 'EM! THEY CAUGHT US OFF GUARD! HOLY HALIBUT, WE'RE TRUSSED UP LIKE A COUPLE OF DEAD DUCKS! THIS WHOLE THING IS RIDICULOUS—POSITIVELY WEIRD!
YOU'RE STRONG, NAMOR—BREAK LOOSE!
IN A MATTER OF SECONDS, BOTH ARE FREE AGAIN....
GOOD WORK, PAL! I GUESS THOSE TWO CHARACTERS DON'T KNOW MUCH ABOUT THE SUB-MARINER!
"DIDN'T" KNOW, NAMORA! SOMEHOW, I'VE GOT THE IDEA THAT THIS THING GOES BEYOND THE REALM OF THE TANGIBLE!
YOU MEAN—YOU MEAN WE'RE DREAMING ALL THIS? THAT THESE TWO GUYS REALLY AREN'T REAL?
SOMETHING LIKE THAT—BUT WE'LL SOON KNOW FOR SURE! THERE THEY ARE—OVER THERE!! COME ON, NAMORA!!!

BLISSFULLY UNAWARE THAT THEIR CAPTIVES HAVE ESCAPED, THE TWO WEIRD BROTHERS CAVORT GAILY THROUGH THE EERIE, RAPTUROUS DEPTHS --- UNTIL THEIR COMPLACENCY IS RUDELY SHATTERED!

GET 'EM, NAMORA --- BUT TRY NOT TO HURT 'EM!

NUH?

YET, APPARENTLY HYPNOTIZED BY THE ETHEREAL SUSPENSION OF THE DIMENSIONLESS DEEP, THE BEWITCHED MEN PUT UP LITTLE RESISTANCE TO THE SUDDEN ATTACK....

I DON'T LIKE THIS TURN OF EVENTS, NAMORA ... HELP ME STRAP ON THEIR AQUA-LUNGS!

I DON'T SEE HOW THEY WERE ABLE TO HOLD THEIR BREATHS SO LONG!

NEITHER DO I --- BUT THEY DID! AND SOMEHOW THEY MANAGED TO TALK TO US BY THOUGHT-TRANSFERENCE! WE'LL FIND OUT HOW THEY ACCOMPLISHED IT IN A FEW MINUTES NOW...

... WHEN WE GET THEM BACK ON THE RAFT... BUT SOMEHOW I'VE GOT A FEELING WE'LL NEVER FIND OUT, NAMOR!

THE SURFACE WATER BREAKS, AND TWO LIMP FORMS ARE GENTLY CAST UP ON THE RAFT...

ROD! CHICK! OH, THANK THE DEAR LORD YOU FOUND THEM, NAMOR! ARE THEY-- ARE THEY ALL RIGHT?

START THE PULLMOTOR, MISS DOLORES -- QUICK!!!

NO--- NO! !--I CAN TELL J-JUST BY L-LOOKING AT THEM --- YOU WERE TOO L-LATE, NAMOR! THEY-- THEY D-DIED BEFORE YOU EVER FOUND THEM! OH, ROD--- ROD! WHY DID YOU DO IT?!" WHY? OH, WHY--- WHY!!?"

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B-B-BUT, MISS DOLORES! WE TALKED TO THEM DOWN THERE, JUST A FEW MINUTES AGO! WE---

SHUT UP, NAMORA! IT'S NO USE-- SHE'S RIGHT! I DON'T KNOW HOW IT ALL HAPPENED--- NO HUMAN COULD POSSIBLY SURVIVE AT THAT DEPTH, YET---

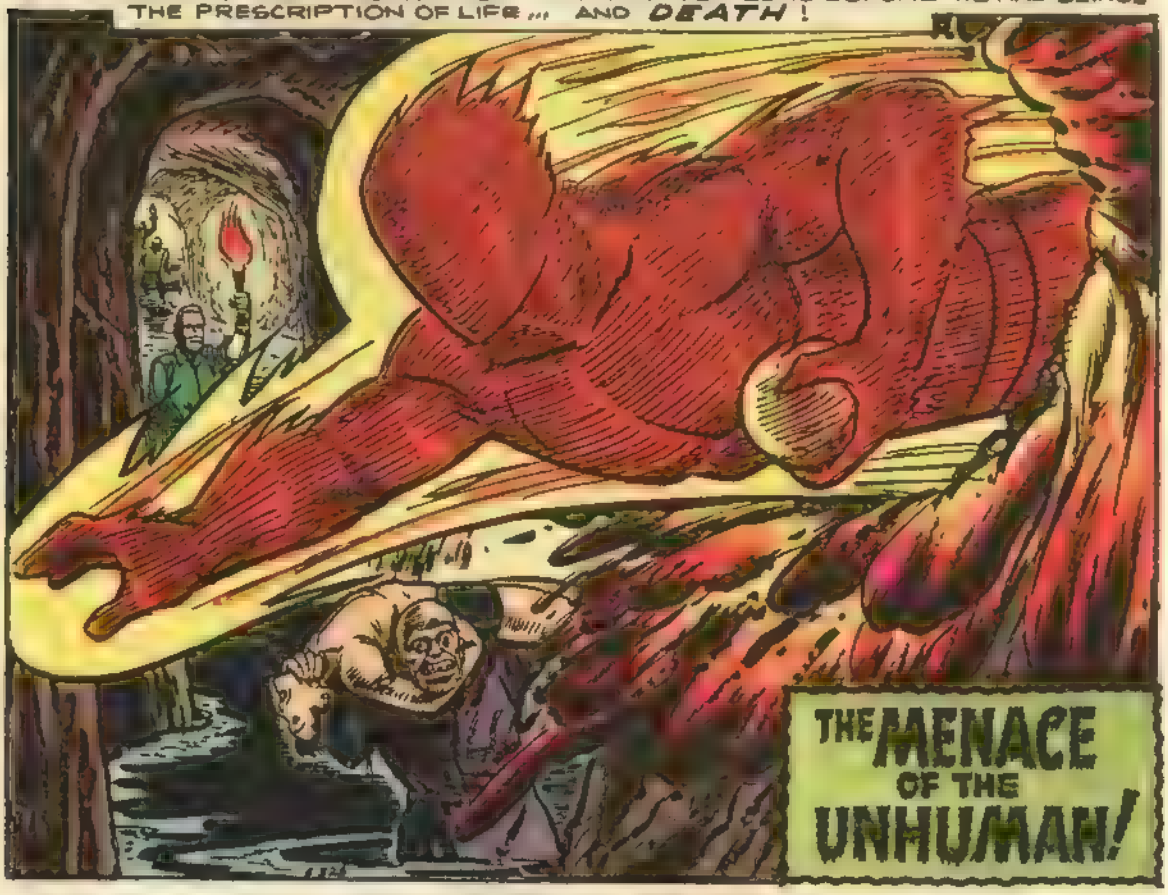
---WE SAW WHAT WE SAW! THEY WERE HAPPY-- CONTENT--- TOO MUCH SO!!! IT MAKES ME WONDER IF WE SHOULDN'T HAVE LEFT THEM THERE --- AND I WONDER, TOO, WHY WE WERE PERMITTED THAT VISION OF THEM - AFTER DEATH - UNLESS---UNLESS WE, TOO WERE VICTIMS OF THE RAPTURE OF THE DEPTHS!!!

THE END

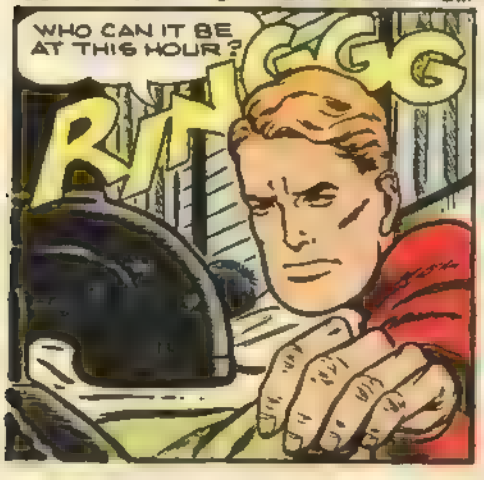
LOOK FOR MORE MYSTERIOUS ADVENTURES OF THE SUB-MARINER IN THE HUMAN TORCH COMICS! HE'S IN THIS ISSUE... ON YOUR NEWSSTAND NOW!

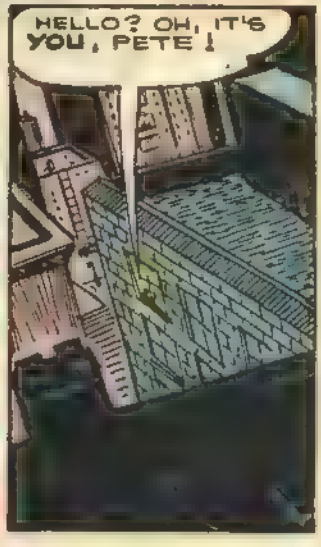
THE HUMAN TORCH

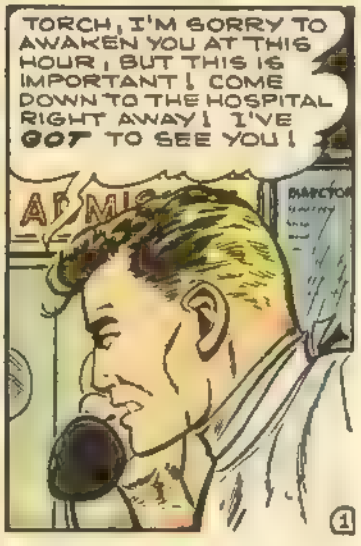
WHAT ARE WE ... DEEP INSIDE? NO MAN KNOWS WHAT HIS BEING IS! WE COME FROM BLACKNESS AND WE GO BACK TO IT, WITH, IN BETWEEN, A SMALL PLACE OF LIFE AND MEMORY! THE PRESCRIPTION WAS WRITTEN LONG BEFORE WE HAD BEING... THE PRESCRIPTION OF LIFE ... AND **DEATH**!



A TELEPHONE RINGS IN THE DEAD OF NIGHT, BRINGING WITH ITS SOUND THAT OMINOUS FEELING...







THAT WAS PETE ... DR. PETER FORAY, CALLING! WE'RE GOING TO THE HOSPITAL!

WHAT FOR? I'M NOT SICK ... THOUGH I WILL BE IF YOU DON'T LET ME GET SOME SLEEP!

A FEW MINUTES LATER ...

LOOK, THERE'S MARGOT, PETE'S FIANCEE .. WHAT'S SHE DOING AT THIS HOUR?

ONLY ONE WAY TO FIND OUT, EH, TORCH?

HI, MARGOT!

TORCH! AND TORO! THANK GOODNESS! I WAS JUST GOING TO *SEE* YOU!

YOU KNOW WE PLANNED TO BE MARRIED! BUT LATELY PETE'S CHANGED! SOMETHING'S WRONG WITH HIM ... AND HE WON'T TELL ME WHAT IT IS!

MAYBE WHATEVER IT IS THAT'S BOTHERING HIM IS WHAT HE WANTS TO SEE US ABOUT! KEEP YOUR CHIN UP, MARGOT ... THINGS CAN'T BE TOO BAD!

THEY TOOK MARGOT TO HER HOME BEFORE CONTINUING ON TO THE HOSPITAL ...

TWO SWELL PEOPLE, MARGOT AND PETE! WE'LL HAVE TO FIND OUT WHAT'S WRONG, AND HELP THEM!

A FEW MINUTES LATER, THEY MET YOUNG DR. PETE FORAY IN THE HOSPITAL ...

I CALLED MY SUPERIOR, DR. MANNING, TOO! YOU KNOW HIM?

WHO HASN'T HEARD OF THE GREATEST SURGEON IN THE WORLD! WHAT'S THIS ALL ABOUT, PETE?

OPERATING

THIS IS WHAT IT'S ALL ABOUT! THIS ACCIDENT VICTIM! DR. MANNING AND I STARTED TO OPERATE ... HE DIED AS WE OPENED HIM! THEN I SAW ....

A ROBOT!
EXACTLY!
TELL HIM THE REST, PETE!
EVERYTHING SYNTHETIC... YET IMPOSSIBLE TO TELL FROM A TRUE HUMAN UNLESS HE'S OPENED UP! AND THAT ISN'T ALL...
THIS IS THE THIRD ONE THIS YEAR!
IF YOU'RE WONDERING WHY IT HASN'T BEEN REPORTED, I ADVISED AGAINST IT! I'M AFRAID IT WOULD MEAN PANIC!
I TRUST YOU GENTLEMEN WILL KEEP THIS SECRET... AS WE HAVE! PETE, I'LL LEAVE YOU TO CLOSE UP THE ROBOT AND ENTER HIM FOR BURIAL AS ANY HUMAN... IDENTITY UNKNOWN!
YES, SIR! GOOD NIGHT!
LISTEN, TORCH, I'VE GOT AN IDEA! THE MACHINERY OF THESE ROBOTS IS EXACTLY LIKE HUMAN ORGANS, BUT MADE OF METAL! I THINK I CAN MAKE HIM LIVE AGAIN!
THEN FOLLOW HIM... TRY TO FIND OUT WHERE HE CAME FROM! LET'S GO, PETE!
PETE BENT OVER THE BODY, WORKING FEVERISHLY.
PETE, MARGOT CAME TO VISIT US! SHE SAID SOMETHING'S BEEN WORRYING YOU! WAS IT THIS ROBOT BUSINESS?
NO, TORCH! IT'S SOMETHING PERSONAL! IT'S CONNECTED WITH THE LEPROSY WORK I DID IN INDIA!
LOOK! HE'S BEGINNING TO BREATHE!
QUICK, GET HIS CLOTHES ON HIM... THEN WE'LL HIDE AND WATCH!

THEY TURNED OUT ALL THE LIGHTS, SAVE ONE! THEN THEY HID... AND WAITED!

WE'LL FOLLOW AND GET TO THE BOTTOM OF THIS! I HATE ANYTHING FAKE... THAT'S WHY I HATE THESE ROBOTS... AND FOR **ANOTHER** REASON, TOO!

WHAT'S THE ***OTHER*** REASON?

I WANT TO LEAVE THE BEST OF ALL POSSIBLE WORLDS FOR MARGOT, WHEN I'M NOT HERE TO PROTECT HER! I DON'T WANT THESE HORRIBLE METAL MEN IN HER WORLD WITH WHATEVER THEIR EVIL PURPOSE IS!

ZOO

WE'RE IN THE NATURAL SETTINGS OF THE LIONS' DENS! THEY'RE COMING! **FLAME ON!**

NO! IF WE FLAME FULLY, WE MIGHT GIVE OURSELVES AWAY TO THE ROBOT! *HAND FLAME... ON!*

THERE! ***THAT*** STOPPED 'EM!

THAT ROBOT WALKED RIGHT PAST THEM!

HE WENT IN THIS DOOR! THERE'S A PASSAGE AND LIGHT COMING FROM BEYOND!

PETE, WHAT DID YOU MEAN WHEN YOU SAID YOU WOULDN'T BE AROUND TO PROTECT MARGOT?

JUST THAT! WHEN I WAS MAKING THOSE STUDIES IN INDIA, I CONTRACTED LEPROSY! I FOUND OUT A FEW DAYS AGO... THE FIRST SYMPTOMS SHOWED! THAT'S WHY I WANT TO CLEAN THIS ROBOT THING UP BEFORE I "CURE" MYSELF... WITH A **LEAD** PILL!

THERE THEY ARE! THAT MUST BE THE LOT OF THEM! LET'S DESTROY THEM!
NOT YET, PETE! LET'S LISTEN AND WATCH FIRST! WE'VE GOT TO FIND OUT WHAT'S BEHIND THIS!
SOON THE CALL WILL COME TO OTHERS I HAVE MADE WHEN THEY REACH THE AGE DESIGNATED ON THE TIMER WITHIN THEM! THEY HAVE BEEN CONDITIONED TO COME HERE WHEN THAT TIME COMES, AND WE WILL GIVE THEM THEIR TASKS!
YOU LOOK LIKE HUMANS! REMEMBER, I AM THE MAKER, THE MASTER! SOMEDAY THERE WILL BE ENOUGH OF YOU TO CONQUER, AND WHEN THAT TIME COMES, YOU WILL MAKE EARTH MY KINGDOM! A KINGDOM OF ROBOTS!
WAIT! YOU ARE THE ONE WHO WAS INJURED AND CEASED TO FUNCTION! WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?
I WOKE UP IN THE HOSPITAL! I WAS WHOLE AGAIN, AND I CAME HERE!
AND WE FOLLOWED HIM! FLAME ON!
TORCH, LOOK! THE MAKER IS DR. MANNING!
GET THEM!
THEY KEEP COMING! MANNING IS ESCAPING!
NO HE WON'T!
TORO, FLAME HOTTER! SHOOT FLAME DARTS AT THEIR MIDDLES AND FUSE THE METAL!
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OHHHH!!

BLAM!

WE'RE STOPPING THEM, TORO!

SUDDEN QUIET CAME! THE FIGHT WAS WON! THE ROBOTS LAY THERE, INERT MASSES OF METALLIC RUIN!

HE'S STILL ALIVE! THE SKIN ON HIS FACE... I THINK **HE'S** A ROBOT TOO!

UGH! HE'S **NOT** A ROBOT... HE'S A... A ***MONSTER***!

NO; NOT A MONSTER! A **TYCLOSE**... AN INTELLIGENT BEING FROM ANOTHER DIMENSION, TRAPPED HERE IN YOUR DIMENSION BY A TRICK OF FATE! TO **ME**, ***YOU*** ARE MONSTERS!

I WAS A GREAT SCIENTIST IN MY OWN DIMENSION! I DISCOVERED A WAY TO ENTER YOUR DIMENSION AND WAS TRAPPED HERE! SO I DISGUISED MYSELF, FASHIONED MY ROBOTS TO MAKE A NEW KINGDOM FOR MYSELF HERE! NOW I DIE, AND THE IRONY IS THAT **YOU** SHOULD KILL ME, PETE!

FOR **YOU** WERE THE MOST ***PERFECT ROBOT*** I EVER MADE! IN ANOTHER MONTH, THE CALL WOULD HAVE COME, AND YOU'D HAVE KNOWN! I...

OHHHHHH!

I... A ROBOT! **NO! *NO!***

HE'S DEAD! WHAT'S THAT?

IT'S PETE! HE THOUGHT THE NUMBNESS IN HIS HANDS WAS LEPROSY! I KNEW THE **TRUTH** WHEN I ACCIDENTALLY GRABBED HIS HAND WHEN MY OWN HAND WAS FLAMING... AND HE FELT NOTHING!

WE WON'T TELL MARGOT THE TRUTH... JUST THAT HE DIED TRYING TO FIGHT THE ROBOTS!

WE'LL HAVE TO TELL THE AUTHORITIES, SO WHEN EACH ROBOT GETS THE CALL AND COMES HERE, THEY CAN BE DESTROYED! POOR PETE... THERE WAS ONLY **ONE** WAY OUT FOR HIM!

BE SURE TO FOLLOW ALL THE ADVENTURES OF THE HUMAN TORCH AND TORO! THEY'RE IN THE SUB-MARINER COMICS THIS MONTH TOO!